



WASHINGTON REPORT

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PROBLEMS OF PROLIFERATION

During the pre-dawn of the nuclear age a tight security lid was clamped over the U. S. Army Engineers' Manhattan Project. The enemy was not to be forewarned. Of equal importance, neither was any success in the effort to be shared with friends. The atom's staggering power was to become a permanent United States monopoly maintained by harboring from all others both the know-how and fissionable ingredients needed to fabricate atomic weapons. Following the war the Atomic Energy Act of 1946 cut off even our British partners in the original effort from further U. S. weapons data. The Act took the extreme precautionary step, since retraced, of nationalizing all material capable of nuclear fission. Until this day the constant public policy of the United States has been against proliferation of nuclear weapons to other countries.

Despite this stern policy and our many vigorous protests, the world's "Nuclear Club" now has a membership of five. Unquestionably assisted by effective espionage, the U. S. S. R. gained membership in 1949. This prompted the British to produce their bomb by 1952. Following a rule-of-thumb that any relatively industrialized country with a \$2-3 billion desire for nuclear weapons can have them, France became the fourth nuclear power in 1960 and Red China the fifth in 1964.

Russian and English stockpiles of enriched uranium, plutonium and hydrogen weapons are regarded by many experts to rival the American stockpile in ingenuity. Available evidence on the French indicates reliance on plutonium techniques, but they have announced an enrichment program. They are expected to test their thermonuclear research this year by exploding a hydrogen device at a South Pacific test site. Contrary to expectations China exploded an enriched uranium device rather than a plutonium bomb. Its significance is that enrichment evidences greater technological sophistication than plutonium production.

The British, who gained American nuclear knowledge honestly, and the Russians, who got it otherwise, evidence the impossibility of suppressing technology for long by secrecy measures and security regulations. On their part, the French and Chinese demonstrate that neither a democracy nor a dictatorship will be deterred from the nuclear weapons path by pleas to allocate the massive effort involved to more productive channels. There are possibly a dozen more countries now scientifically, industrially and financially capable of building primitive nuclear devices. These include: Canada, Sweden, Spain, Israel, the U. A. R., Italy, Czechoslovakia, West